

Federal Interim Committee Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
518, Main Street @9:00A.M. Sept. 11, 2014
Kamiah, Idaho

8/30/14

Dear Federal Interim Committee,

I understand this meeting is on taking back Federal Lands to the jurisdiction of the State of Idaho and control of the waters in Idaho. As for who I am I was a full time gold suction dredger working on the South Fork of the Clearwater River, Newsome Creek and Red River and while things were getting worse for mining due in large measure to the 40 year run of the enviromania binge until in 1997 the EPA region 10, Seattle stepped in from nowhere and everthing came to an end as they kept lying to us about when we would have their ridiculous NPDES permit and of course to this day no permit has ever been issued.

Some of us looked into the possibility of State ownership/repatriation of Federal Lands years ago as it looked like the thing to do if we were to continue mining, however my conclusions then are the same as today. I am for the State ownership of Federal Lands but only if you use the original Federal Laws governing the staking and mining of mining claims on these lands for metallic minerals like gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, titanium, tungsten, tin, etc as it is now, without any leases and royalties. This does not include the current permitting process on Federal Lands by federal and state agencies as it has become disfunctional: total disunfeasibility. (I am aware of Federal and State lease/royalties on non-metallics like oil, gas, sand and gravels etc. and certain taxes/sales on State timber but this is different than metallics and will not go into finite detail here because it might be hogging the show other than one example of many you have to put up with from the no knowledge no experience unsuspecting. Here in Elk City this bar/cafe owner kept giving me the gas about we miners should be paying big royalties to mine like the money people pay for trees on Forest Service ground. I got tired of hearing about it so asked the gas bag to come over to the window and "point to all the trees he could see outside here in Elk City and in the visible forest which he did. So then I asked him to point to all the gold being he could "find" all the trees and "walk" to all of them with no trouble at all. This shut him up good and I never heard about it again. I am not in any way for the leasing and royalties on metallic minerals in Idaho or now Federal Lands or Federal Lands that may again become Idaho property and for very good reasons. Royalties on metallic minerals has been brought before Congress a number of times by ignorant environmentalists, foolish special interest groups, individuals writing articles who are braindead and all with no knowledge or experience of what they are talking about and it always comes up the same. Prospecting for metallic minerals, then developing for production if you should be fortunate to find a paying proposition, then permitting for production was, is, and will continue to be a high risk time consuming expensive business at best, far above the average business. All you have to do is look up and down any main street America city and see all the doctors, lawyers, workers etc. Now show me all the individuals in like number of successful individual miners – they ain't there. The second thing that needs to be understood is when one deposit is worked out you have to find or have found a second one to mine or you are done mining; this is a major reason why metallics have a depletion allowance on any profit to help reduce the impact of finding another deposit. On gold it is 20%. Today the 20% depletion allowance is too little: first the odds for hardrock have went from 1000 to 1 to 3000 to 1 according to informed sources due to environmental regulation. Recent increased costs due to continuous induced inflation, ETF and other precious metal price suppression schemes and fiddling with the markets make it even more risky. Every miner needs to be independent. In today's "environment" I'd say that's a very difficult thing to do, hardrock or placer mining here in America because of over taxation and over regulation of all sorts as it is.

If you should get the Federal Land Forests and the small scale placer miners are to be permitted then my feeling for decades is we should have only one door to go through and one door to go out to get the permit as you suffer holy hell with the multiple present permitting "systems" but in many cases like gold dredge mining there is no need for this long drawn out permit process; you only need to know who and where we are going to dredge and little else as it's just the same old rehash of the same old worn out garbage year after year and decade after decade.

With the present system of things the fishermen are permitted by license to kill so many anadromus or other fish and fish eggs in the female fish who come here to spawn, yet the dredgers not only don't get the same deal but we are to kill no fish eggs or fish. This makes no sense when you consider the thousands of anadromous female fish full of fish eggs that are caught every year from the mouth of the Columbia on up to here in Elk City and all other rivers and streams flowing into the Columbia where female anadromous fish are caught full of eggs. We don't kill fish from what I've been able to see like very small to big. They just like to hang around like a bunch of kids to see what's going on or maybe get a bite to eat like at McDonald's. Over the years there's been a lot of B.S. promulgated by assumptions inside agency's and those with an agenda, so if the state should take back jurisdiction of Federal Lands this should be considered because it isn't now.

On Newsome Creek summer 1978 we started a dredge cut and no fish were visible. It wasn't long before there were 11 trout and 15 white fish living with us plus some little guys in the dredge excavation which was about 18 inches to bedrock and around 12 feet square. After we took out the run of gold and left the fish were still there and stayed for some time. I know because I was checking to see how long it took for all visible life forms to repopulate the excavation and check to see what the hydrologist and helper from U of I report had to say in their excavation they had dredged in the area. Well it was less than 3 months for them, and where we dredged took less than two weeks more.

In summer 1986 on Newsome Creek me and another fellow took out about a 150 foot run with the new 8 inch dredge I had and the salmon or steelhead were coming up to spawn. Well several of them stopped over under the dredge on their way up stream and stayed under the dredge for a few days and then were gone. I didn't matter if the dredge was running or not they could care less. We used to watch them when eating lunch on the shore and they didn't care about that either.

When I was dredging alone on the Southfork Clearwater in the late 1970's below the mill here a big salmon cruised up next to my right ear and stayed there (my buddy but a little scary at first). The fish was there for several days and would swim back to the back of the dredge where the tailings were then come back next to me always on the right side and stay there for a while real close; it was something to experience. One day I came to work and the salmon was dead on the bank and I assumed it was the one living with me as I didn't see it anymore.

What I'm really saying here is if the dredgers were all gone it's not going to make any significant difference in the fish populations. Most of the dredgers that were here in the 70's and 80's are gone but I still see the fish population hasn't taken an explosive leap forward and they are still working on the possibility of improving habitat and it's doubtful this is going to make a dramatic difference either except spend a lot of money in my area which by the way is an established mining area and multi-purpose, not supposed to be turned over to F&G, NMF, EPA, IDWR, Forest Service, some committee, the enviro's or any body else.

Should this thing move forward I would like to participate in some way.

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